Crescendo

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/18248468.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Jack Crawford
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - College/University, Young Will Graham, Dark Will Graham, Protective Hannibal Lecter, Codependency, Manipulative Relationship, Will Graham Knows, Jack Crawford Being an Asshole
Language:	English
Series:	Part 4 of Evolution
Stats:	Published: 2019-03-26 Words: 2,706 Chapters: 1/1

Crescendo

by Creed Cascade (creedcascade)

Summary

Will finally quits his job at the university and Hannibal is most pleased, but not so pleased with Jack (Part 4 in an ongoing series).

“I quit!” Will snapped, storming into Hannibal’s kitchen. “I told Jack to take his broom and shove it. I almost ki-“

Will’s words stopped abruptly and he took a deep breath. He was still dressed in his stained, oversized work overalls, minus his boots. Hannibal was forever trying to teach him control even though Will knew his impulsive nature was one of the things that drew Hannibal.

“I almost lost control.“ Will paused, using painfully clipped words, and started to peel off his overall top, until it hung around his waist and he was left in a white undershirt. His curls were damp and sweat beaded on his forehead. Will’s breathing was laboured and patches of sweat stained the fabric under his arms. “I needed to see you before I did... something stupid. The things Jack said... the things he said about you. I wanted to hurt him... so bad.”

Hannibal was prepping for the evening’s meal in a crisp white apron lightly splattered in blood. His sleeves were rolled up to his elbows as he thinly sliced a chunk of red meat. Will didn’t miss that Hannibal’s practised knife motions paused briefly at the mention of violence. Only a minute tell. His fist clenched and unclenched on the handle. Quick, but Will saw it.

“Did you harm him?” Hannibal asked. His tone was curious and controlled.

“I didn’t,” Will said with a shake of his head. “I wanted to, but I knew you wouldn’t want me to.”

Hannibal cocked his head to the side. “Oh?”

“Not like this,” Will corrected, knowing without being told what Hannibal would want. “Not so public and without thought. It would be... crude. Rash.”

“Yes,” Hannibal agreed and set the knife down on the cutting board. “But, it was your decision to make.”

“Jack is fine. Pissed off, but fine. Now what?”

“That is also your decision to make,” Hannibal said.

“You say that, but it endangered this... us,” Will said and motioned his hand around the kitchen, then toward Hannibal. “You. Your life here. Your career. Us. That’s the last thing I want to do.”

“As I have said before, and I will continue to do so... you can always come to me. I will protect you. And, I do appreciate what I built here. I also appreciate that you value it. Jack is a nuisance with an unfortunate affection for you.” Hannibal ran a finger along the shiny flat blade of his knife. “I can expect a strongly worded memo perhaps and, undoubtedly, a lecture with accusations and threats. Now is not the time for other methods of resolution. We have so much to do... so much ahead of us.”

Will nodded. “Your plan for me.”

“I prefer *design*,” corrected Hannibal. “My design for you doesn’t involve a mop or being Jack’s puppet on strings. Many other things... great things. You have so much potential, Will. Not because of what you can do, but because of you. The real you. Your empathy only augments the real you.”

“I know you... the real you,” Will said, meeting Hannibal’s gaze direct on. “And it doesn’t scare me.”

“My broken little tea cup has such sharp edges,” Hannibal praised, a slight smile ghosted across his lips. “There’s that potential I was speaking about. Someone I care deeply for in my youth taught me about the Japanese Art of Kintsugi... repairing that which is broken with precious metals... once beautiful pottery... sharp, dangerous edges - shattered and rebuilt into something even more beautiful. Something truly unique. Piece-by-piece. Tell me about what you think of my design for you?”

Will moved even closer into Hannibal’s personal space. “Your design for me... you want a true partner, but I’m not your equal.”

“Not yet, but some day. Is that what you want?”

Will closed his eyes and drew in a slow, deep breath as he fell deeper into Hannibal’s being. Darkness covered by social niceties. Surface darkness covering even darker recesses. Hannibal did not regret the darkness, but it was lonely. Hannibal wanted many things and considered many paths for Will. Some contradicted each other. Many possibilities, some more attractive to Hannibal than others. Above all things Hannibal would never forgive betrayal.

“I would rather die than betray you,” Will said.

“Tell me,” Hannibal demanded. “Tell me what you know.”

“You want to possess me.”

“Yes,” Hannibal agreed with a nod.

“You want to show me me the truth. Feed me. Control me,” Will said, seeing Hannibal’s design and opening his eyes to meet Hannibal’s gaze. “But, you like that I want my own path. You like my... unpredictability. You like the dichotomy... the challenge. You adore my monster.”

“I do. You long to belong to someone. Everyone else has abandoned or left you,” Hannibal said. “I can promise that I will never let you go.”

Will shivered at the possessive declaration, pupils dilating a fraction.

“You will have to earn your place at my side,” Hannibal told Will. “It shall be your becoming.”

Will moved even closer until he was chest to chest with Hannibal and then Will laid his head on Hannibal’s shoulder. Will could smell the iron of blood he most associated with Hannibal.

Quality blood... fresh. Not the mess from the fish shacks on the docks of his youth. The smell of blood be now associated with Hannibal and belonging.

“You will test me. To prove that I’m worthy.” Will blinked a few times, more of his true self bleeding through. Hannibal might be a predator, but so was he. “I’m not a plaything, Hannibal. I will be your equal in everything and in every way.”

Hannibal’s hand came to rest on the back of Will’s neck, squeezing over the pulse point with his thumb. “You are remarkable, Will. I would change nothing about you, only enhance what you naturally are.”

“I want to be a predator of predators. I want to eliminate the monsters and predators of this world who prey on the weak,” Will said.

“I want you to see the beauty of it,” Hannibal said and he dug his thumb into Will’s pulse point. “You’re hungry I’m so many ways.”

Rather than fight the entrapment, Will bared his neck further to Hannibal. For the first time in a long time he didn’t fight his empathy. He closed his eyes and opened himself to Hannibal. Hannibal plucked one of the freshly sliced pieces of meat and held it to Will’s lips. Will did not hesitate and ate the raw meat, chewing carefully.

Will understood. The veil lifted completely. In another time, or in another place, Will may have fought it, but this Will understood and accepted.

Hannibal studied him and waited. Will swallowed the meat.

“They were pigs,” Will whispered. “You made something beautiful out of their ugliness and rudeness. You’ve thought about killing me.”

“But, I didn’t. It doesn’t scare you.”

“No, it doesn’t,” Will agreed.

“It excites you.”

Will nodded. “You could have killed me, but you didn’t because you saw something in me. I didn’t repulse you. You didn’t reject me. You want someone to... understand. Truly understand. I do.”

Hannibal brushed a thumb over Will’s cheek. “Better than anyone else, but not quite yet. But, you will.”

“I want to hunt with you,” Will said. “Only those who deserve. A hunter of monsters, the truly rude and ignorant. I know you’d appreciate the challenge. There is also a certain protection to limiting our prey to a small circle. Many won’t fault a killer of killers.”

“We have time and I am patient. You will learn to channel your passion.”

“Passion, I like the sound of that,” Will said.

Hannibal leaned in and gently drew his cheek against Will's cheek, inhaling his scent. He withdrew only enough to kiss Will on the forehead. It was almost chaste except Will felt Hannibal's tongue dart out to taste him.

"With time," Hannibal said. "That too must be earned."

Will groaned. "Hannibal, please."

Hannibal made a tsking sound. "I've been thinking about the many aspects of your eduction."

"I'm listening..."

"I think you should consider engineering," Hannibal said.

"Engineering?!" Will sputtered and pushed away from Hannibal. "You want to talk about that now? When we could-"

"We we're discussing your education and this is merely another aspect." Hannibal grabbed Will's hand and ran his fingertips over the callouses. "You are talented with your hands. Mechanically inclined."

"You are..." Will let out a frustrated sigh. "I want-"

"Patience," Hannibal chided. "These are merely the first moves of our opening. Our game has just started."

"A bit of the ol' Latvian Gambit, then," Will said, recalling their chess games. "Or, more like the Fried Liver Attack?"

"Impudent."

"I was thinking of criminology or maybe psychology..." Will tilted his head to the side and considered Hannibal's design. "No, not those. Too close to home for you. It would be too easy for others to say any of my accomplishments were because of you... too easy to spin that you took advantage of me. Academic Incest. You want an accomplished partner. You want my accomplishments earned at a safely perceived social and academic distance. Only the best."

Hannibal nodded. "It would be unwise to follow too closely in my academic footsteps. That doesn't mean you can't purse your interests during personal time. There is also the issue of professional stereotypes to consider."

"You mean idea that engineers are socially inept loners and weirdos and I'd fit right in?" Will said.

"Your words, not mine," Hannibal said. "However, engineering in my experience is a rather tolerant profession. It has much more latitude than the social science in many ways."

"Easy to blend in. Low key." Will sighed and nodded. "Math and machines don't judge. There is some wisdom to that. I've thought of it before. I'd want to work on engines... boat

engines."

"I'm sure we can make that happen," Hannibal said. "It is a respectable profession. It would be easy to pull up roots and resettle when necessary."

"It would get me out of Jack's immediate grasp. Handy," Will said. "You're talking like I can even get in."

"Now that you have quit your job, you can focus completely on your academic studies with the private school I have arranged," Hannibal said with a smile. "You'll just have to write the final exams to earn your high school degree, which we both know you can pass in your sleep. You'll be able to apply for entrance next term with direct entry into engineering. The Dean is a personal friend and tuition is not an issue."

"One of the perks of being your... what am I?"

Hannibal leaned in close and whispered in Will's ear. "Mine."

"Yes," Will shivered and closed his eyes. That was what he wanted and needed to hear. Now, he wanted to tell Hannibal what he wanted and needed to hear. "I'm hungry."

Hannibal smiled. Slowly he picked up one of the finely sliced pieces of raw, red meat and fed it to Will. They both knew it was a promise.

HHHHHHHH

"You are not as bad as people say," Jack snapped as he stormed into Hannibal's open office. He was the only one who dared come during Hannibal's office hours other than Will. "You are much, much worse."

"Well, good morning to you, Dr. Crawford. Did someone put decaf in the faculty coffee pot again?" Hannibal asked. He didn't even look up from the paper he was grading and quickly wrote down a scathing comment. "It certainly wasn't me."

"Of course it was you," Jack said. "You enjoy toying with people. Winding them up and seeing what happens."

"I would never be so gauche."

Jack sat down in the plush leather chair across from Hannibal's desk. "True. You'd use cyanid. Hannibal, put down the damn pen and pay attention to me."

Hannibal quickly wrote 'insipid drivel' in the margin and set down the pen, then steepled his fingers. "What can I do for you, Jack? You appear to be distressed."

"Don't start with me," Jack said. "We both know why I'm here."

Hannibal tapped the paper when his fingertip. "The alarming idiocy of our undergraduates?"

"Will," Jack said.

“Is much brighter than the entire group of undergrads from my honour’s course combined.”

“This has gone far enough,” Jack said. “Will quit his job yesterday. He’s throwing his future away for you, in a misguided sacrifice.”

“Your idea for his future,” Hannibal said. “Not his.”

“Will needs to think about the greater good. He has this condition for a reason,” Jack said. “We can’t encourage him to be selfish.”

“I never took you for a determinist, Jack,” Hannibal scoffed. He eyed the sharp letter opener on his desk with longing. “There is a pun about free will I could make here, but I won’t. Will informed me of his decision to quit and I support it.”

“It’s a damn waste of his talents. He wasn’t always going to be a janitor, but it’s realistic. It’s long-term security,” Jack said and slammed his fist on the chair’s arm. “It would have gotten him through the process of getting a GED and he could get bursaries and benefits as a university employee. All he has to do is get the proper degree and I can get him a job a profiler to properly utilize his gift.”

“That will not happen,” Hannibal promised.

“Because of you.”

“No,” said Hannibal. “Because of Will. He is becoming what he wants to be, not what you’ve decided he needs to do. He told me he intends to pursue engineering.”

“Since when?” Jack scoffed.

“He has a strange affinity for boat motors that’s endearing,” Hannibal said. “It’s probably is an association with a pleasant memory from his childhood and his father.”

“He doesn’t need to be a glorified mechanic. He needs proper academic training to channel his empathy,” Jack insisted.

“If it was what he truly wanted I would support it,” Hannibal said. “But, it’s not. What he wants and what he needs is stability and a sense of belonging.”

“I agree. But, it shouldn’t be from you. You’re enabling his unhealthy attachment to you,” Jack accused. “You’re not even gay.”

“Labels, Jack? Really?” Hannibal ask. “Now, that is truly gauche. I thought you were more enlightened about identity.”

“He’s vulnerable and you’re taking advantage of that,” Jack said. “Your career will be over for this. But, if you step away from him and away, then I keep my mouth shut.”

“That sounds remarkably like a threat, Jack, and I know you wouldn’t threaten me,” Hannibal said. “There is nothing to ruin my career. Will is a man in his twenties. I’m not in position of power over him.”

“He’s not normal and we both know that.”

“No, he’s not normal. He’s extraordinary,” Hannibal said. “Wonderfully so.”

“He’s a person with a mental difference,” Jack said.

“He’s a survivor,” Hannibal said.

“Do you even love him?”

“Again, with the labels,” Hannibal sighed, growing bored. “So boringly contrived.”

“What about Alana?”

“She was a pleasant distraction and is remarkable. She isn’t Will. I ended it with her for a reason, but none of this is your business,” Hannibal said. “This supersedes your power as department head and self-appointed position as protector of Will. You’re invading our privacy. I’m the one who could bring a complaint against you.”

“For what?” Jack laughed.

“Harassment. Bigotry,” Hannibal said. “Homophobia.”

“Are you threatening me?”

“Of course not,” Hannibal said and picked up the pen, taping it on the desktop. “I am merely pointing out I could, but I would never do that to an old friend and colleague.”

“You’re taking advantage of him,” Jack insisted.

“Jack, despite your accusations, at the moment, I am nothing more than his mentor,” said Hannibal. “I see potential in Will to be someone great who does great things. I do not have relationships with what-ifs.”

“You’re grooming him,” Jack growled.

“I am helping him reach his full potential,” Hannibal said. “Now, would you please leave so I can finish grading this textual diarrhoea.”

Jack got up and just before he left Hannibal’s office he said, “This isn’t over, Hannibal.”

“I highly doubt it,” Hannibal agreed.

END.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!